



Childhood Connections

July 2, 2024

## Roads to Success

Throughout 2024, the Office of Childhood (OOC) will share “Roads to Success,” a collection of stories from professionals and higher education institutions. Stories from professionals feature achievements from people working in childhood programs such as home visiting, early intervention, child care, Head Start, preschool, and afterschool. Stories from higher education institutions highlight colleges and universities who are using innovative methods to support and grow the early childhood workforce. There are many roads to success. It is important to highlight the varying and unique pathways professionals take and how higher education programs can pave the way. These stories are also available at the bottom of the [Early Connections webpage](#).



This month's "Road to Success" focuses on Stephens College located in Columbia, Missouri. Stephens has multiple options for students interested in pursuing a degree related to early childhood.

For students who want certification to teach in Missouri public schools, the college offers a Bachelor of Science in Education with Certification in Early Childhood Education, or a Bachelor of Science in Education with Certification in both Elementary and Early Childhood Education. For those who are not interested in certification, they offer a Bachelor of Science in Human Development, in which students can choose a Psychology or Child Development concentration track. Students in all programs benefit from The Children's School at Stephens College, a laboratory preschool and elementary school located on campus. Students begin assisting in classrooms during their first semester.

The college's Financial Aid office is making college more affordable and accessible with the program, "Promise." This new program helps students avoid taking out loans to pay for school. Students receive help finding scholarships and other sources of funding. The scholarship program, "Mission Promise Kept," is a unique opportunity for veterans. The scholarship provides wraparound services for veterans pursuing a degree at Stephens by assisting them with finding housing, transportation, and giving their children access to enrollment at the Children's School at Stephens College.

## NEW! System Point of Entry Contracts Awarded

OOC administers Missouri's Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)



**REMINDER! Early  
Childhood State**

early intervention program for children age birth to 3 years with developmental disabilities, referred to as the First Steps program.

OOC contracts with agencies for regional System Point of Entry (SPOE) offices throughout the state to provide local administration and service coordination for the First Steps program, including referral, intake, eligibility determination, and Individualized Family Service Plan activities for eligible children.

Service Coordinators provide the vital link between families, First Steps providers, and SPOE administration as well as monitoring the provision of direct services. On May 23, 2024, the State of Missouri, Office of Administration announced contract awards to the agencies for First Steps SPOE services effective June 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025, with the option of four additional renewals in one-year increments through 2028-29.

View the [full announcement on the OOC Early Intervention, First Steps webpage](#)

### **NOW OPEN! Child Care Rules Weighted Risk Survey**

As part of a current project, the Child Care Compliance & Regulation team has developed a [Weighted Risk Survey \(WRS\)](#). The survey will ask you to assign a numerical value to each licensing rule that represents how much risk is posed to children if that rule is violated.

This survey is open now through August 31, 2024, to all licensed child care providers, advocacy groups, parents, and other childhood leaders. If you would like to learn more about this project, please visit the [Child Care News & Updates webpage](#).

### **NEW! Share Your Success – We Want to Hear From Providers!**

Since August 2021, OOC has administered nearly \$700 million to more than 1,500 programs to build back the child care industry and strengthen the child care workforce impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Advisory Council Meeting**

The next meeting of the Early Childhood State Advisory Council (ECSAC) will be held on **Wednesday, July 17, 2024, at 12:30 p.m.**

The agenda is online now, and the other presentation materials will be posted on the [ECSAC meeting webpage](#) approximately one week before the meeting.

### **REVISED! ARPA Discretionary Spend Plan**

As part of the Fiscal Year 2025 budget process, the spend plan for Child Care American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Discretionary funds was revised.

The revision reallocated funds from several activities to have additional funds to support the child care subsidy rate increase.

The [revised spend plan](#) is posted at the bottom of the [Child Care Relief Funds webpage](#).

### **NEW! Advocating For Your Early Learner Webinar Series**

[Missouri Parents Act \(MPACT\)](#) presents a [summer webinar series](#) for parents of children receiving First Steps Early Intervention services. Webinar topics

We have heard numerous accounts of the impact these grant funds have had on programs across Missouri. The grants included Retention of Child Care Staff, Paycheck Protection Program, Enhancement grants, and Innovation Start-up and Expansion that helped build new community partnerships.

To showcase the impact of these funds, OOC is compiling a series of stories and experiences from child care programs and families.

Send your child care relief funds story to [childcarerelief@dese.mo.gov](mailto:childcarerelief@dese.mo.gov) by August 15, 2024.

### **NEW! Child Care Subsidy Provider Rates**

An increase in Missouri's child care subsidy rates will be in effect for services in July 2024 and corresponding payments made in August 2024.

The new rate will increase child care subsidy rates to the 100th percentile for infants/toddlers and the 65th percentile for preschoolers and school-age children.

Learn more about the [rate amounts on the Child Care Subsidy webpage](#).

### **ANNOUNCEMENT! Head Start Collaboration**

On June 4 – 6, 2024, Head Start leaders from Region VII (Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, and Nebraska) met in Overland Park, Kansas for the annual Region VII Head Start Conference. Missouri's Head Start Collaboration Office (MHSCO) director and assistant director attended to share updates and information with colleagues.

Visit [Head Start Work is Heart Work](#) to learn more about how Head Start is continually working towards [their mission](#) for eligible children and families to receive high-quality services in safe and healthy settings to prepare children for school and life.

### **RESOURCE! Office of Child Advocate Services**

The Office of Child Advocate (OCA) was established in 2002 as an agent of accountability regarding the Missouri Department of Social Services, Children's Division. The OCA provides an

include Understanding the Individualized Family Service Plan, Understanding Parental Rights, Family Recordkeeping and more.

These virtual webinars are being offered July 8 -12, 2024, from 10:00 -11:30 a.m. daily.

### **NOW AVAILABLE! 2020-2023 PDG B-5 Renewal Final Report**

The final report for the Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five (PDG B-5) is now available. This report summarizes grant activities related to Early Care and Education systems building completed in Missouri from 2020-2023.

Activities include needs assessments, strategic planning, workforce development, and systems improvement.

[Review the report on the PDG B-5 grant reporting webpage.](#)

### **UPDATE! Missouri CCDF State Plan**

OOC submitted the 2025-2027 Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) state plan to the federal agency on June 28, 2024.

[A copy of the CCDF state plan submission and a summary chart of the comments received during the public](#)

avenue through which citizens can obtain an independent and impartial review of disputed decisions, actions, and inactions regarding any child at risk of abuse, neglect, or other harm.

The OCA offers eight primary services to concerned citizens:

- Review foster care case management
- Review unsubstantiated hotline investigations
- Review mediation between parents and schools regarding abuse allegations in the school setting
- Review child fatalities with a history of child abuse and neglect concerns or involvement with the Children's Division
- Review policy and procedures of Children's Division, the Juvenile Office, and Guardian ad Litem within a county
- Intervene on behalf of a child during judicial proceedings
- Increase knowledge of professionals and the general public regarding child welfare
- Provide information and referrals for families needing resources

For more information on OCA services, call 866-457-2302.

#### REMINDER! Renew MOPD Membership



June 1, 2024, marked the 1st anniversary of the [Missouri Professional Development \(MOPD\) system](#), Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) early childhood workforce registry and training system.

One year after child care providers have signed up, they will receive an email to renew their MOPD profile membership. Renewing the membership annually is required to ensure the system functions correctly and clock hour compliance is accurate on reports. The steps for membership renewal are the same as applying for registry membership.

comment period is posted on the OOC webpage under the section titled CCDF State Plan.

#### RESOURCE! 5 C's of Media Use for Children

The American Academy of Pediatrics, Center of Excellence on Social Media and Youth Mental Health have developed a new approach to help parents develop healthy digital habits for young children.

The 5 C's media use guidance offers easy-to-remember, age-based tips. It is based on research that supports family relationships, social-emotional development, and mental health.

[Find 5 C's tips for infants, toddlers and preschoolers, school-age children, young teens, and older teens.](#)

#### REMINDER! Fire and Sanitation Inspection

For Licensed and License-Exempt Child Care Providers.

[Rules and regulations](#) require an approved annual fire and sanitation inspection. Reach out to your compliance inspector if you need assistance with contacting fire and sanitation regarding your annual inspection.

Organizations will receive an email to review program information every 12 months. Please update or confirm information within the Organization Profile to ensure accurate records- this helps expedite DESE monitoring visits, grants, and other DESE applications.

View [important Resources and Announcements at the Early Connections MOPD webpage](#).

### **REMINDER! Home Visitor Child Development Associate (CDA) Scholarships are Available**

Did you know home Visitors can earn their Home Visiting CDA through T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Missouri, a program of Child Care Aware® of Missouri. This scholarship program helps Home Visitors advance their careers by earning national credentials through clock hours or college credits.

To learn more about the program and to apply, visit the [Home Visitor CDA scholarship webpage](#).

### **UPDATE! OOC Training Library**

The OOC Training Library has over 16 courses available for child care professionals through the [MOPD webpage](#) and an additional 14 courses will be added over the summer.

The e-learning courses can be taken for clock hour credit, which is given immediately following successful completion of the course. All required training courses and a few other courses are free, and the remaining courses have a \$5 fee. This fee goes directly to the LMS for the use of the system.

Some users have experienced technical issues when viewing the training and we are working diligently with the developers to alleviate issues. For the best user experience, it is recommended to use the Microsoft Edge browser, close all other browsers on the device, and use a device that is larger than a phone when viewing a training.

For additional information on the OOC Training Library and the MOPD system, please visit the [MOPD webpage](#).

For all announcements regarding the MOPD system and training updates, visit the [MOPD](#)

Find your [compliance inspectors contact information on the Child Care Districts Offices Map](#).

### **REMINDER! Summer Water Safety**

In the United States, drowning is the second leading cause of unintentional injury-related deaths among children, taking more than 2,000 young lives each year.

The American Academy of Pediatrics states that children must be watched by an adult at all times when in or near water. Children can drown in swimming pools, other bodies of water, and standing water around the home.

Review this [water safety handout](#) developed by the Missouri Department of Social Services for more information.

### **REMINDER! Imagination Library Registration is Open**

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is now available for every child ages birth to 5 years in Missouri. A parent or guardian can register their child on the [Imagination Library national webpage](#). Books will be mailed directly to the home of registered children at no cost to the family.



[announcements webpage.](#)

Learn about Imagination Library enrollment in your area by [visiting our Imagination Library webpage.](#)

## Spotlight on Success

Spotlight on Success aims to share stories from local programs that are building community partnerships in order to strengthen and coordinate childhood programs.



The Community Impact Network, located in North St. Louis County, partners with organizations that support early childhood education in the Normandy Schools Collaborative (NSC). It also offers professional development for educators, including in-class resources and training for early child care centers and providers.

Community Impact Network members collaborate to deliver essential early childhood services in the NSC; United 4 Children (training and resources), Parents as Teachers (developmental screenings), Nurses for Newborns (prenatal care and home visits), St. Louis Area Diaper Bank (diapers for area providers to distribute to families), and Belle Children's Services of St. Louis Arc (screenings and action plans).

The Community Impact Network supports these and more than 70 other organizations through sharing resources and hosting monthly meetings where organizations can collaborate with each other. They also support by providing free training sessions, sharing data, communications support, and more.

"Investing in early childhood programs is investing in the future of our community," said Neosha Franklin, Community Impact Network Chief Executive Officer. "Through our collaborative efforts, we are not only providing essential services but also building a foundation for lifelong success for our children. Together, we are shaping a brighter, more resilient future for St. Louis."

**UPDATE! Preschool Development Grant**



The Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five (PDG B-5) provides funding over three years to coordinate a more effective, high-quality early childhood system that better prepares Missouri children for success.

Each month, the OOC hosts a live webinar to provide updates and information about the PDG B-5 to stakeholders. A [recording](#) and the [PowerPoint slides](#) from the June 2024 webinar are available in case you were unable to attend and wish to hear the information. You can view archived webinars [here](#):

- [May 2024](#)
- [April 2024](#)
- [March 2024](#)
- [February 2024](#)
- [January 2024](#)
- [November 2023](#)

The [PDG B-5 dashboard](#) is also updated monthly. This dashboard provides an at-a-glance look at priority areas, budget status, and key accomplishments.

### PDG B-5 Monthly Webinar

Join us for the next PDG B-5 Stakeholder webinar on **Tuesday, July 23, 2024**, from noon to 12:45 p.m. to learn more and ask questions. You can [access the webinar](#) in a Google Chrome or Safari web browser. Do not view in Internet Explorer. We hope you can participate!

For questions about the stakeholder webinar series, or suggestions for topics in future webinars, email us at [Childhood@dese.mo.gov](mailto:Childhood@dese.mo.gov).

### Archived Editions of Childhood Connections

[Visit the OOC webpage to find previous editions of Childhood Connections.](#)

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